

**LINCOLN COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
BOARD MEETING  
USDA Service Center Conference Room – Davenport, WA  
Wednesday, April 13, 2022**

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:**

Meeting called to order at 8:49 AM by Chairman, Jeff Schibel. Those attending the meeting in person or by telephone were as follows: Chris Laney, Josh Sherwood and Braidy Haden - LCCD Supervisors; Mark Stedman, Lincoln County Commissioner; Cari Roepke, NRCS; Elsa Bowen, Delaini Disher, and Dean White - LCCD staff.

**A. MINUTES: Additions / Corrections:**

It was noted that in the March 9 minutes on page 2 in the paragraph halfway down the page that the "\$200,00" needed to be corrected to \$200,000.

- **1. Josh moved to approve the March 9, 2022 minutes as amended. Chris seconded. Motion passed.**

**B. TREASURER'S REPORT / TRANSACTIONS REPORT:**

- **2. Josh moved to pay and approve vouchers #11699 to #11727, along with 22 EFT's, totaling \$289,438.68. Braidy seconded. Discussion was held. Motion passed.**
- **3. Braidy moved to submit voucher #9 for the VSP 4 grant in the amount of \$8,258.91 to the Conservation Commission. Chris seconded. Motion passed.**
- **4. Braidy moved to submit voucher #9 for the 22-39-IM grant in the amount of \$14,419.59 to the Conservation Commission. Chris seconded. Motion passed.**
- **5. Braidy moved to submit voucher #11 for the 21-27-NR grant in the amount of \$172.25 to Adams CD. Chris seconded. Motion passed.**
- **6. Braidy moved to submit voucher #9 for the 22-39-FR grant in the amount of \$0.00 to the Conservation Commission. Chris seconded. Motion passed.**
- **7. Braidy moved to submit voucher #9 for the 22-39-HZ grant in the amount of \$497.36 to the Conservation Commission. Discussion was held. Chris seconded. Motion passed.**
- **8. Braidy moved to submit voucher #1 for the 22-39-DG grant in the amount of \$1,399.14 to the Conservation Commission. Chris seconded. Discussion was held. Motion passed.**

- **9. Braidy moved to submit voucher #9 for the 22-39-NR grant in the amount of \$86.13 to the Conservation Commission. Chris seconded. Discussion was held. Motion passed.**
- **10. Braidy moved to submit voucher #5 for the 22-39-DR grant in the amount of \$0.00 to the Conservation Commission. Chris seconded. Discussion was held. Motion passed.**
- **11. Braidy moved that the Lincoln County Conservation District Visa statement for February 24, 2022 through March 24, 2022 be approved. The total amount owed was \$723.16. Chris seconded. Discussion was held. Delaini and Elsa noted that US Bank had made a clerical mistake on the District's March statement and that the March amount due had been mistakenly applied to Lincoln County. The issue has been resolved and the correct amount owed by the District on the VISA statement for purchases made for the month was \$723.16. Motion passed.**
- **12. Braidy moved to approve the Lincoln County Conservation District Ag Link credit card statement with a closing date of March 31, 2022. The total amount owed was \$547.09. Chris seconded. Motion passed.**

Delaini passed around bank statements for the board members to initial.

The Board reviewed the report of the current annual leave/sick leave balances for District employees. It was noted that current District liability for staff leave/sick leave balances had exceeded the reserve fund balance of \$80,000 and that the reserve fund balance needed to be raised.

- **13. Chris moved to raise the Reserve Fund for Employee Liability Coverage to \$100,000. Braidy seconded. Motion passed.**
- **14. Chris moved to approve the Treasurer's report and Grant's report as presented. Braidy seconded. Motion passed.**

## **C. AGENDA**

### **Cost Share Approval**

Hardcopies of the Cost Share Action spreadsheet were distributed. There were 8 requests for final cost share payment from cooperators with the Direct Seed 2 grant. With these final cost share payments being paid to these 8 cooperators, the Direct Seed 2 grant will be closed out.

- **15. Chris moved to approve the Cost Share Action spreadsheet as presented. Braidy seconded. Motion passed.**

## **NRCS Report**

Cari reported that EQIP applications have been ranked. Adams County had 31 applications with just 1 preapproved application for irrigation practices. Lincoln County also had 31 applications with 8 preapproved applications for forest management, grazing management, and residue management practices. As noted in March, NRCS – WA has already spent all of its 2022 EQIP funding and has requested more EQIP funding but has yet to hear back from the national office. The Local Working Group which helps to rank EQIP priorities for Adams and Lincoln counties will be meeting remotely on Thursday, April 28 starting at 1 PM

CSP applications were due by March 31. For classic CSP, Adams County had 31 applications and Lincoln County had 48 applications. For CSP renewals, Adams County had 4 applications and Lincoln County had 17 applications.

The CRP field training session was held on April 7 for Adams and Lincoln County staff who are scheduled to conduct CRP field visit reviews this year.

FPAC (Farm Production and Conservation) office supervisors (Sara, Cari and Elsa) will be holding a meeting this afternoon. There is no update on the building lease agreement. Cari noted that the West Palouse Team has multiple job positions open to fill, including a Soil Conservation Technician position, Administrative Assistant position, Pheasants Forever position, and Pathway student position.

## **Direct Seed 3 Grant and 2022 PNDSA Training**

Connor and Delaini have been taking applications for the Direct Seed 3 grant for openings in both Lincoln and Adams counties. There are still a few openings for Direct Seed 3 applications, with 3 openings not yet filled in Adams County and 1 applicant likely to cancel an application in Lincoln County. Applicants for the Direct Seed 3 grant (\$28 per acre for 250 acres maximum for up to 3 years of payments for direct seeding) have been required to complete and sign a form verifying that they have never yet implemented direct seeding in their farming operation and that they do not yet own their own direct seed drill.

The District has received a request from the Pacific Northwest Direct Seed Association to renew its \$100 basic membership level for 2022. Braidy noted that the PNDSA Cropping Systems Summer Expo will be held on June 15 and 16 at the Palouse Empire Fairgrounds west of Colfax, with the optional Advanced Soil Health Day held on June 14. There are separate registration fees for the Soil Health Day and for the 2 day Summer Expo, with many different registration costs based on whether or not an attendee is a PNDSA member and whether or not an attendee will be attending both the Soil Health Day and the 2 day Summer Expo. The cost of a PNDSA member to attend both the Soil Health Day and 2 day Summer Expo is \$345. Josh, Chris, and Braidy noted that would most likely attend 1 day of the Summer Expo and will commute. Elsa and Delaini will look into the getting registration and travel paid through the Direct Seed 3 grant.

**16. Josh moved to approve \$100 for the 2022 basic membership request from the Pacific Northwest Direct Seed Association. Braidy seconded. Motion passed.**

**17. Josh moved to approve registration and travel costs for board members and staff to attend the 2022 PNDSA training in Colfax in June. Chris seconded. Motion passed.**

### **County Commissioners Report**

Commissioner Stedman reported that after 2 years of negotiating, the county and the City of Reardan have come to an agreement on a contract for providing city policing and court services to Reardan. Mark noted that more marijuana growers are coming into the county to grow marijuana but are not applying for the conditional use permit. Previous marijuana growers who have owned land have tended to leave the land and growing facilities in a mess when they leave the county. Lincoln County will be the owner of a new broadband access system with the help of a \$10 million grant. The county will own a new fiber optic cable system and will be providing service to many of the cities in the county along with non-incorporated communities like Hawk Creek Ranch Estates which has facilities for installing fiber optic cable.

Mark noted that the Columbia Basin Development League is looking to expand its communication network by working with citizens who are key communicators in their community or the county. Mark thanked Elsa for her efforts working on the WaterSMART grant from USBR to get the Columbia Basin Sustainable Water Coalition established.

Elsa noted that a second grant application request for \$145,000 has been submitted to the Office of Columbia River to do continued well level monitoring and find additional new wells to monitor well water levels in the northeast corner of the county and especially in areas of new housing development in the NE part of the county.

### **WaterSMART Grant Update**

Elsa reported that one RFP (Request for Proposals) application had been received for the facilitation task and two RFP applications had been received for the technical ground water review task for the Columbia Basin Sustainable Water Coalition with funding from the WaterSMART grant through the Bureau of Reclamation. The Columbia Basin Development League applied to serve as the facilitator for the establishment of the Columbia Basin Sustainable Water Coalition for \$30,000. Aspect and Landau Associates/GeoEngineers both applied to serve as the technical contractor for ground water review for the Coalition for \$20,000. Commissioner Stedman noted that Coalition members had filled out scoring sheets to select the top candidate for the technical contractor for ground water review. The top candidate selected for the ground water review was Landau Associates/GeoEngineers.

***18. Josh moved to approve the selection of the RFP application from the Columbia Basin Development League to serve as the Facilitator for the Columbia Basin Sustainable Water Coalition with \$30,000 in funding from the WaterSMART grant. Chris seconded. Motion passed.***

***19. Josh moved to approve the selection of the RFP application from Landau Associates / GeoEngineers to serve as the technical contractor for ground water review for the Columbia Basin Sustainable Water Coalition with \$20,000 in funding from the WaterSMART grant. Chris seconded. Motion passed.***

### **WSU/USBR Grant Update**

Dean distributed well level charts for four wells that were measured in the Lincoln County well level grant and which had new well measurements taken in early March 2022 for the current WSU/USBR grant. The new March measurements were added to

the right side of the charts. All four wells showed declines in March 2022 peak well levels ranging from 8 to 20 ft. below early spring 2019 peak well levels. The two deep irrigation wells, AHP783 and AHP731, showed peak March 2022 well levels that were surprisingly only 1 to 3.5 feet below early spring 2021 peak well levels, in spite of the bad drought and heat during the 2021 growing season. Well measurements for the WSU/USBR grant will only be taken in early spring for the peak well level before the well pumps are turned on, and in mid to late fall just after the well pumps have been turned off to capture the low well level for the year. There will no longer be any other measurements taken during the well pumping season that show the larger range of well level variations recorded across the entire pumping season in the previous Lincoln County well level grant.

### **District Email Server Replacement**

Elsa noted that the current Google Gmail service used by many conservation districts across the state will be discontinued and shut off on May 1, and a recent email from the Conservation Commission has now notified CD's that the Commission will also not provide continued email service for a year while conservation districts work to transition to a new email server system. Lincoln County CD currently has 11 email accounts on the current Gmail email system through the Conservation Commission under [wadistrict.net](mailto:wadistrict.net) and [conservewa.net](mailto:conservewa.net) email addresses. Conservation Districts will also have to download and save staff emails on the current Gmail email system in order to be in compliance with state public records regulations.

Elsa and Delaini have researched alternative email servers for District email and found the following two systems as the best two available options. Microsoft 365 is less expensive but still costs \$20 per month per email address, offers less online storage, and is setup differently than Gmail and will require some time for staff to become acquainted to the new email system. Google Gmail is more expensive but offers more online storage and is already familiar to staff and board members. The Conservation Commission has recommended several software packages to download and save current emails on the Conservation Commission Gmail server. District staff are more in favor of staying with Gmail for the new District email system and using the current District website address of [lincolncd.com](http://lincolncd.com) as the new domain name.

**20. Braidy moved to approve the staff recommendation to establish a new email server for District staff and board members through Google Gmail and use [www.lincolncd](http://www.lincolncd.com) as the new domain server name. Josh seconded. Motion passed.**

### **Comments on Proposed Grant County CD Name Change**

Elsa reported that Grant County CD is considering changing its name to the Columbia Basin CD. Mike Baden has suggested that other conservation districts provide comments in favor or against the proposed name change to Grant County CD. Braidy suggested that since local fire districts in Lincoln and adjacent counties have the county name as part of the fire district name, conservation districts that include all areas within their respective county should also maintain the county name as part of the CD name. Dean noted that the former four county Columbia Basin Ground Water Management Area (GWMA) and the current Columbia Basin Sustainable Water Coalition both have Columbia Basin in their name and both organizations covered/cover Adams, Franklin, Grant and Lincoln counties. If Grant County CD

changes its name to Columbia Basin CD, this will probably cause unneeded confusion over CD boundaries and responsibilities with the general public since all four counties mentioned above, each with their own conservation district, have already been historically associated with the "Columbia Basin" area.

Elsa will compile District comments on the proposed Grant County CD name change and will forward them to Mike and to Grant County CD.

### **Legislative Bill Updates**

Elsa has continued to forward legislative bill updates to board members. Some important changes have been made to the open public meetings act. Meeting facilitators now need to post the meeting agenda 24 hours ahead of the meeting online. Paper notices need to be posted at the door of the meeting room after the meeting has adjourned to let the public know that the meeting has been adjourned. Conservation districts are now encouraged but not required to video record board meetings and then post the recordings online.

### **2022 Tree Sale and Cobb Ranch WRP Planting**

All but one tree sale order has been distributed to tree sale customers. The trees and shrubs ordered from the PMC arrived one week later than scheduled but arrived in time for tree sale order packing. The trees and shrubs ordered from Cold Stream Farm in Michigan arrived a day after the main tree sale packing was done due to frozen ground at the nursery and due to delays in FedEx delivering the ordered stems to Davenport. This led to additional phone calls to affected tree sale customers to come back to the office to pick up the remaining portion of their orders over the next work week after the regular tree sale pickup ended on April 1. The net profit or loss for the 2022 tree sale not including District staff time should be available at the May board meeting:

District staff have laid out potted stock and willow poles for DNR work crew members to plant and have picked up the empty pots at the Cobb Ranch WRP planting along Crab Creek for the past several weeks. Connor is out at the project area today assisting with the planting. About 3,000 stems total will be planted this spring, with another 1,500 stems to be planted later in fall. The weather has been windy, cold, rainy, or snowy just about every day of the planting, which may be able to be finished tomorrow.

### **Local Working Group Meeting**

The Local Working Group which helps to rank EQIP priorities for Adams and Lincoln counties will be meeting remotely on Thursday, April 28 starting at 1 PM. Mike Baden will be facilitating the meeting.

### **Wildlife Proviso Grant**

Cost share for wildlife friendly fencing had been delayed. Applications for cost share projects from the District have not yet been processed by WDFW. All projects need to be completed by June 30, 2023.

### **VSP Update**

Connor has installed data loggers for monitoring selected water quality parameters at all of the selected water quality monitoring locations.

### **CRP Signup 58 Task Order**

District staff attended a CRP field check training session held northeast of Davenport last Thursday. Glen Riehle has been hired as a temporary employee for the District and has started conducting CRP field checks in Adams County. The white 4 door pickup was taken to the Ritzville Field Office for Glen to use for conducting CRP field checks.

### **Planning for May Conservation Commission Tour**

Elsa announced that Memorial Hall has been rented for the Conservation Commission tour dinner on May 17 and the caterer for the dinner has been contracted to provide the meal. A 57 passenger bus, van and pickup have been reserved for the tour. The tour will start at 1 PM with the boarding of tour attendees in Airway Heights and will return back to Memorial Hall by 5 PM for the tour dinner. Due to the short time for the tour, the number of available tour stops will be limited. The tentative planned stops include the Wilke Farm and a grassed waterway on the Dewald farm close to Davenport, the Allington Bay boat ramp site on Pacific Lake north of Odessa, an irrigation well in the Odessa area that has been well level monitored if it can be fitted into the tour, and a tour of the Davenport Community Garden close to Memorial Hall if time allows before the tour dinner starts. Tour announcements will soon be sent to Conservation Commission staff and board members and to the county Commissioners. All District board members are encouraged to attend the tour if possible.

### **WACD Update**

Jeff reported that Chris Pettit, the new Conservation Commission Executive Director, was introduced to WACD board members at the recent board meeting. WACD now has a full staff of 12 employees. The WACD bank account is in good condition with \$875,000 in the bank and an additional \$1.83 million in investments. The PMC is projected to bring in \$1.5 million in tree and shrub sales for 2022. Tom Salzer discussed the 2023 fiscal year budget. WADE training will be held in person on June 13 -15 at the Sleeping Lady in Leavenworth. Up to \$20,000 is available in scholarships for conservation district staff to attend WADE training. \$2 million in funding should soon be available from the Conservation Commission for the Sustainable Field and Farms Program.

### **Miscellaneous**

Elsa showed the 3 Blink security cameras that have been purchased to provide coverage of District vehicles parked at the office to help deter gas theft, catalytic converter theft, and vandalism. Parking of District vehicles will soon be moved from the back of the office to the east side of the office.

### **FSA Report**

There was no report from FSA.

### **Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

Chairman Jeff Schibel adjourned the meeting at 11:00 AM. The next board meeting is scheduled as an in-person meeting on Wednesday, May 11, 2022 starting at 8:30 AM at conference room in the USDA Service Center in Davenport. A telephone call in number will be available for those people wishing to participate by phone.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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Josh Sherwood, Secretary

  
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Dean White, Minute Taker

SUMMARY:

All 20 motions were reviewed:

- 1. M/S/P to approve the March 9 minutes as amended.
- 2. M/S/P to pay and approve vouchers #11699 to #11727, along with 22 EFT's, totaling \$289,438.68.
- 3. M/S/P to submit voucher #9 for the VSP 4 grant in the amount of \$8,258.91 to the Conservation Commission.
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- 20. M/S/P to approve the staff recommendation to establish a new email server for District staff and board members through Google Gmail and use www.lincolncd as the new domain server name.